



The SIDEWINDER

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OCTOBER 2001

NEWS FROM NMCB SEVENTEEN



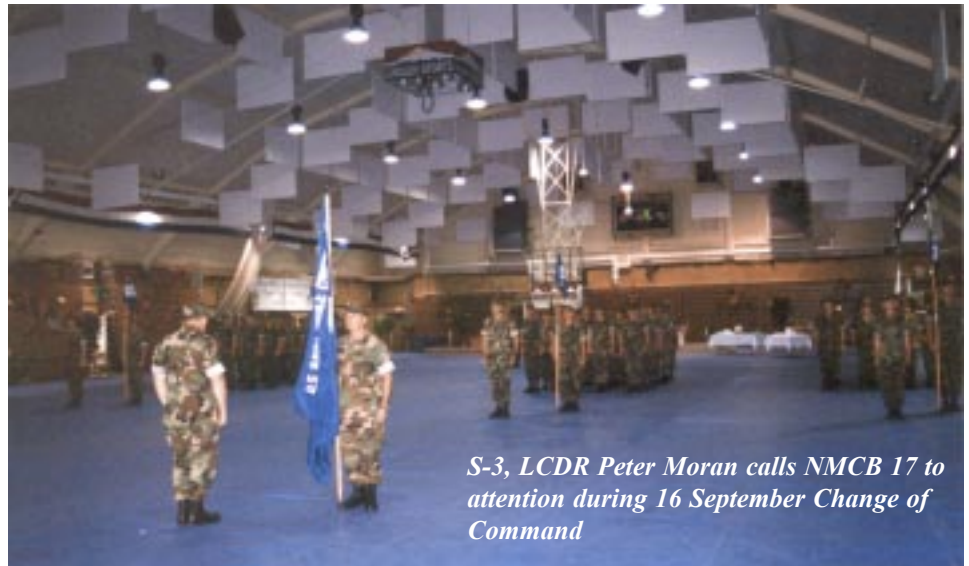
CDR Bleskey is no Stranger to NMCB 17

For Commander Daniel Bleskey, taking command of Naval Mobile Construction Battalion SEVENTEEN is somewhat of a homecoming. After completing a successful assignment with the THIRTIETH NCR as Chief Staff Officer, he is excited to return to the "best Battalion in the Naval Construction Force".

Commander Bleskey was assigned to Naval Mobile Construction Battalion SEVENTEEN from May 1989 through September 1996. During that time, he served as the Assistant Operations Officer, ALFA Company Commander, Training Officer and Executive Officer.

In his civilian employment, CDR Bleskey is the Principal Engineer for the Ventura County Waterworks District No. 8 / City of Simi Valley, California. He is responsible for the planning, analysis, review and construction of water facilities for a mu-

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S-3, LCDR Peter Moran calls NMCB 17 to attention during 16 September Change of Command

CDR Daniel Bleskey Takes Helm

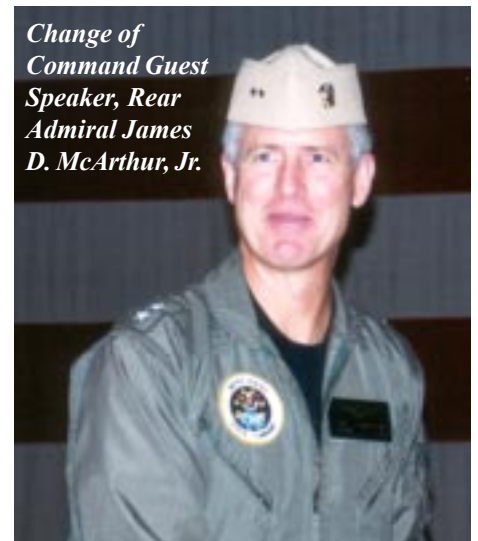
Fort Carson, CO -In a brief, but memorable Change of Command ceremony, CDR Daniel Bleskey became the 27th Commanding Officer of NMCB 17 on Sunday, 16 September 2001.

The ceremony was subdued, as the attacks on the Nation were fresh on everyone's mind. Original plans had included airlifting over 100 personnel from remote detachments. The airlift plans were cancelled at the request of the Air Force's Air Mobility Command (AMC). AMC subsequently provided support to relief efforts by airlifting fire fighters, rescue personnel and equipment.

The attacks' impact on airline flights resulted in many out-of-state personnel driving long distances to attend. Commander Whittenberg commented that he and Commander Bleskey performed a significant portion of their turn-over during the 20-hour drive from Southern California.

A reception was held and photos were taken and after the ceremony.

Change of Command Guest Speaker, Rear Admiral James D. McArthur, Jr.



Rear Admiral James D. McArthur, Jr., Director of Operations, Headquarters, U.S. Space Command was the guest speaker. Admiral McArthur expressed his delight to be back among Naval personnel and spoke of the importance of the Naval Reserve and Seabees in particular during national emergencies.

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nicipality of over 100,000 citizens.

Commander Bleskey is married to the former Ms. Tracy Lynn Kidd. They reside in Camarillo, California with their two children, Brittany and Ryan.

NEW BENEFITS

THRIFT SAVINGS PLAN: On 9 Oct 01, Naval Reservist in a Pay Status became eligible to join the Thrift Savings Plan (TSP). A special open season began 9 Oct 01 and will end 31 Jan 02. You can submit an election form at any time during the special open season, and your contributions will begin the first payday of January 2002 or later depending on when the information was received by DFAS. Currently you will be limited to 7 percent of you base pay for the calendar year 2002. See NAVADMIN 258/01 for specific questions and more detailed information. You can also get information by going to www.tsp.gov.



NMCB 17 Gained five new Chiefs on September 15 during the annual pinning ceremony. Pictured from left to right are: CEC(SCW) Truman Keith Schafer Jr, SWC(SCW) Gerald Allen Kissinger, EOC George Cooper Jones Jr, CMC(SCW) Pete Lynn Barker, EOC(SCW) Mark Donald Abromski

NEW FAMILY SGLI: Effective 1 November 2001 spouses and children of all military members enrolled in SGLI will be automatically covered under the Family SGLI program. The Family SGLI will automatically be deducted starting 1 November 2001. Any member not wanting the Family SGLI must complete a SGLV 8286A and turn it into their Reserve Center Personnel Department prior to 1 No-

vember 2001. Information on this new program including premiums is available at www.insurance.va.gov.

MOUNTAIN BEE RE-SCHEDULED

Operation Mountain Bee 2002 is now scheduled for 13 through 16 June 2002. As before, the exercise will take place from Thursday to Sunday. In addition to airlift support, the 452nd ALCF will conduct training in equipment preparation, pallet building and load planning by.

All hands are expected to participate and encouraged to plan ahead by advising their employers of the dates for this exercise. Members encountering difficulty being released from work for Mountain Bee 2002 should advise their Detachment Officer-in-Charge.

Seabees in the spotlight...



ENS Eric Uptagrafft recently won a silver and two bronze individual medals, as well as three team gold medals at the international shooting match held at Ft. Benning, Georgia on October 6 and 7. The placings earned him the International Distinguished Shooters Badge. The Badge is the highest marksmanship award authorized for wear on a U.S. military uniform. ENS Uptagrafft and his wife, Sandra, are the only Naval personnel who have earned the award that President John F. Kennedy first awarded in 1963.

ENS Uptagrafft is the Denver Detachment Officer-in-Charge (DET 1217).

The 'Winder is a Command authorized publication for NMCB Seventeen personnel, RESCEN COs and other members of the NMCB 17 team. Contents of the 'Winder/Sidewinder are not necessarily the official views of or endorsed by, the US. Government, the Department of Defense or the U.S. Navy. This newsletter is prepared by the Public Affairs Officer, NMCB 17, Building 9271 Butts Road, Fort Carson, CO. 80913-5074. It can be viewed on the World Wide Web at www.seabee.navy.mil/nmcb17.



To the Officers, men and women of NAVAL MOBILE CONSTRUCTION BATTALION SEVENTEEN:

Thank you for your warm welcome. I am honored and very pleased to return to the Best Battalion in the Naval Construction Force. I look forward to meeting each and everyone of you as I perform my Detachment visits.

CDR Whittenberg has turned over to me a well-trained and performing unit and my intention is to take the "baton" and run with it. Ultimately, our most important job is to be ready to mobilize. Given recent events and President Bush's September 20 call to be ready, mobilization readiness is paramount. I would like to briefly discuss and explain some elements that are key to overall Battalion success in the event of mobilization.

Three Integral Phases of Mobilization

1. Individual mobilization - This is the individual's processing at his/her respective Reserve Center. This is where ninety percent of all problems occur. Take time now to review that mobilization check-of list. Make sure now that you successfully process through.

2. Mobilization Center - For us, Port Hueneme.
3. Training - We will spend a few weeks with the 31st NCR making sure all of our Military skills are current before being deployed

CO's FY 02 DET. Visit Schedule

<u>DETACHMENT</u>	<u>DATES</u>
Det 117 Ft. Carson	13,14 Oct 01
Det 0317 Cheyenne	17 Nov 01
Det 1217 Denver	01 Dec 01
Det 0817 Las Vegas	5,6 Jan 02
Det 617 Phoenix	23 Feb 02
Det 717 Tucson	24 Feb 02
Det 1417 Salt Lake City	2,3 Mar 02
Det 1517 Moreno Valley	6,7 Apr 02

All three phases are key, but historically, the first step has posed the most road blocks.

Training and Personal Preparedness

This year's emphasis is on Construction Year training and Warfare Qualification. We must, however, not do this to the exclusion of our own personal preparedness. Get your finances, personal relationships and those things we can least control when away in order. We will always be able to train more, but when mobilized, our ability to take care of our personal lives is greatly reduced. I need Seabees who will be focused on the task at hand, not on whether the mortgage is being paid.

There is considerable speculation regarding possible missions for the Naval Mobile Construction Force in the War against Terror-

ism. Possible missions may vary from homeland defense (e.g., fortifying U.S. Government Installations) to supporting humanitarian assistance and combat operations. Regardless of the mission, deployment preparedness will be important for some time.

Chain of Command

Use it, but realize that our responsibility is to each other, up and down the chain of command. Remember the importance of our specific roles.

Finally...

Thanksgiving is quickly approaching. Please take a moment to give thanks for the many blessing our Nation enjoys, even in trying times.



Daniel Bleskey,
Commanding Officer,
Naval Mobile Construction
Battalion Seventeen

MOBILIZATION READINESS...

GUARD AND RESERVE FAMILY READINESS PROGRAMS TOOL KIT: The updated version of this tool kit is available via the web at <http://www.defenselink.mil/ra/family/toolkit/toc.htm>. The site provides some very useful information regarding deployments and mobilizations.

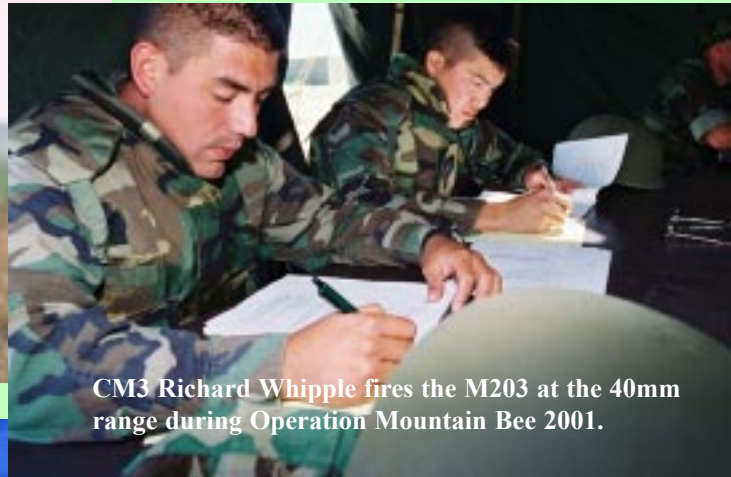


OPERATION MOUNTAIN BEE 2001

17 - 20 MAY 2001



CM3 Richard Whipple fires the M203 at the 40mm range during Operation Mountain Bee 2001.



CM3 Richard Whipple fires the M203 at the 40mm range during Operation Mountain Bee 2001.

First Annual NMCB 17 "Seabee Olympics"



BU2 Cowan loads tents and other gear for transport into the field



HM2 Shanna Napier helps unload the a Navy C-9 after landing at Peterson Air Field



And tonight, a few miles from the damaged Pentagon, I have a message for our military: Be ready. I've called the Armed Forces to alert, and there is a reason. The hour is coming when America will act, and you will make us proud.

-President George W. Bush, in Address to a Joint Session of Congress and the American People on 20 September 2001

